Doctrine of the Priesthood

Let Virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy Confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the Doctrine of the Priesthood shall Distil upon thy soul as the Dews from Heaven. (D & C 121:45)

January 1997 Hanna, Utah Vol. 14 No. 1

An Open Letter
to
Dr. D. Michael Quinn
Ex-Professor of History at BYU
Being a Review of his recent book

The Mormon Hierarchy
Origins of Power

Collier's Publishing Co.

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Introduction

There have been during the last 163 years, many Anti-Mormon books published, and many attacks which have been made against the historical Foundation of the Restoration, and the Restored Church. No doubt one of the most significant of all these ever to be published, is the recent book by Dr. D. Michael Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy Origins of Power*. This is so for a number of reasons, not the least of which is his credentials of Professor of History at BYU, and his long time access to the Archives of the Church. Yet notwithstanding his credentials, as we shall see, there is not a little to be found wanting in his book where it concerns historical accuracy, and it is for this reason, that I have written the following review — because in fact his book is not objective history, but rather *Pure Revenge* against the *modern day brethren*, delivered in the form of a Vicious Attack upon the Historical Foundation of the the Restored Church and the Restoration.

To the Truth!

An Open Letter
to
Dr. D. Michael Quinn
Ex-Professor of History at BYU
Being a Review of his recent book

The Mormon Hierarchy
Origins of Power

February 28th, 1995
Fred C. Collier
HC 63 Box 1
Hanna, Utah, 84031

Dr. D. Michael Quinn
c/o Signature Book
Salt Lake City, Utah, xxxxx

Dear Mike:

I went into Zion's Bookstore the other day, and was excited to see that you finally got your book out (i.e. *The Mormon Hierarchy — Origins of Power)*. Of course, I immediately bought a copy and shortly after Christmas, I made a trip to California, and spent the next two weeks reading it. Truly the research to be found in its pages is a monument to your name — a product representing 30 years of devotion which you have given to the study of Mormon History. Nevertheless, all this aside, your "history" is not without its problems, and it is the problems that I wish to address in this letter. We will commence with an overall assessment. After this, we will turn to the

text, and go through your book page by page and see if the initial assessment fits with the facts.

As I see it your book is important and it deserves a thorough review. It is important because of the topic it deals with. This coupled with your credentials — the 15 years of access which you have spent in the Archives of the church — the massive amount of research and effort which have gone into it — all these make it important to any informed person who would believe in the Restored Gospel.

If you are right in what you have written, then there are about 9 million Latter Day Saints who ought to take their hats off to you for finally getting to the real heart of the Restoration. But then, if it should be proven that in writing what you have, you are in any way less than honest, or that you are motivated by something other than a professional desire for objective history — if in fact it should be proven that your real intent was to settle a personal vendeta with the brethren of the "Mormon Hierarchy" — this would put an entirely different face on your book, wouldn't it!

After spending several weeks reading and rereading your work, it is clear to me that you have deliberately manipulated 100s of historic documents in order to forge them into a vindictive weapon, with the intent of *undermining the **union** of the Latter Day Saints as a people, and the **influence** and **priesthood** of "the Mormon Hierarchy"*. In doing this, not only have you compromised your integrity, but the principles of your profession. This does not say much for your character. In fact it puts you right in the same class with Mark Hoffman — the difference being that he murdered both bodies and souls of men — in your case, you destroy mens faith and in so doing you also destroy their souls. I don't want you to get me wrong Mike — it's not your research that I disagree with — that is the most commendable contribution of your book. Its not the research — its your unprofessional ethics, as manifest through the fraudulent picture which you have created of the past, through the dishonest exploitation of historic documents.

One of the quirks of your personality is that you suffer from what I will refer to as "The Telestial Motif Syndrom". It is as though you are incapable of comprehending the idea that the children of God can actually be inspired to action for reasons other than self-serving motives. Perhaps this is a key to your own inner self. In any case, a reading of your book has convinced me that you suffer from this malady. In your writing you have a bad habit of matching up historic

events with what is usually unrelated personal trivia in an effort to produce conjectural grounds for self-serving motives. You employ this as *an editorial devise* to portray facts in a negative light, and to malign the character of prominent historical figures in the Church. Almost envariably, you portray the most negative point of view and if the sources lack for problems, you will invent them out of thin air. Typical examples of this include, but by no means are limited to, your imaginary invention of an 1828 church (*Origins* 5–6) — the reception of the Patriarchal Priesthood by birth and without ordination (*Origins* 32–33) — and your suggestion that Willard Richards directed Hosea Stout to murder the Prophet's brother Samuel.

You suggest that Richards ordered the murder of Samuel to remove him from the line of succession to which he had been appointed by the Prophet in the event of Hyrum's death. The motive which you conjure up for this act of murder is the fact that Willard was cousin to Apostle Brigham Young — Willard wanted to assure succession to his absent cousin, who as of the time of Samuel's death had not yet returned from his mission in the East.

Remember President Young's unpublished speech which I pointed out to you 15 years ago on the phone — you ought to remember it, as you later added it to the second edition of your article on the Joseph Smith III blessing and published it in *Dialogue*. Remember what President Young said:

> When I first heard of Joseph's death the first flash accross my mind was "are the keys of the priesthood here?" I was sat leaning in a chair, with Orson Pratt upon my left, and *I had no more idea of it falling upon me than of the most unlikely thing in the world*, and I felt it come like a flash of lightening [sic} to my mind, and I said, "the keys of the kingdom are here". *I did not think it was with me*, but I felt they were here, but knew that it was the Lord's business. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. XV: <Summer 1982> 80; *Doctrine of the Priesthood* Vol 7: <October 1990> 29)

Is it not incredible Mike — on his own hook the Prophet's clerk decided to murder Apostle Samuel, in order to assure succession to his absent cousin Apostle Brigham, who at the time was still away on a mission, and who as of yet had not even so much as thought of the idea of being President of the Church! By the way, you forgot to mention that Willard was also related to the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Samuel. So if being related to someone else is a motive for murder, then Willard had the same motive to murder Brigham as

he did Samuel. Really Mike, do you not think it unethical to darken the character and good name of a man, who by the whole historical record, lived and died as a disciple — to actually accuse him of murdering the brother of his own Prophet without any evidence or real motive, other than the fact that he was related to the next guy who became President of the Church. Do you really believe this is responsible history!

In turning the tables, let us examine a small portion of your life, and see if there are any grounds for believing that in writing what you have, you are actuated by an ***ulterior motive***. This may appear to be a personal attack, but it isn't! Whenever someone is accused of a crime, it becomes necessary to examine their motives. If no motive can be found, then the case might be dismissed, and this too, in spite of the evidence. So let us examine your past and determine if you have a motive for the crimes of which you are hereby accused.

In 1985 you published an article on New Plural Marriages among general authorities of the Church after the issuance of President Wilford Woodruff's 1890 Manifesto ("LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904", *Dialogue A Journal of Mormon Thought*Vol. 18: <Spring 1985> 9–105). The public disclosure of this sensitive material created a breach between you and the Brethren of the "Mormon Hierarchy", and this signaled the beginning of the end of your tenure as Professor of History at BYU. Following this, you were placed under surveillance, and in a private moment you were caught doing that which a Professor at BYU ought not to be doing. Besides your rebellion against the brethren, it was discovered that you were gay* and hense for a second and perhaps more important reason, the brethren of the "Mormon Hierarchy" felt that you ought not to be teaching and influencing young minds at BYU. You were then given one of two choices — leave quietly, or leave after being publically exposed. You chose to leave quietly, and so your tenure at BYU was Terminated in 1988. As a consequence of this, you lost your job — and not only your job, but also your family. In the wake of this devastation, both your social and personal life were destroyed, leaving behind a burning anger and hatred for the brethren of the "Mormon Hierarchy", and *a high ranking* ***motive*** to settle your vendeta.

*This is the story that I was told in 1991. I would not mention the details of your personal life, except for the fact that you yourself have since

acknowledged your homosexual tendencies in public and have even gone so far as to publish a book on the subject.

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As if your problems weren't already big enough, after your employment was terminated at BYU, you fell in with the Feminist, Lesbian and Gay crowd at Sunstone Symposium. Of course a celebrity like yourself could not help but become their champion, and in order to favorably impress your new friends, you decided to author a ***fraudulent*** paper, which alleged that all LDS women who had received their Temple Endowment, had actually been ordained to the priesthood.* Shortly after delivering this oration, you were excomunicated, which made your break with the church complete.

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*"Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843", published in *Women and Authority Re-emerging Mormon Femminism* <edited by Marine Hanks 1992> 365 – 409. Ironically, the whole thesis of this paper is nothing but a twisted version of something which you took wholesale from my work ("The Matriarchal Priestesshood and Emma's Right to Sucession as Presiding High Priestess and Queen", *Doctrine of the Priesthood* 8: <March 1991> No. 3).

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All this notwithstanding, you still parade around as a believing Latter-day Saint. But you contradict your confession of faith by the things which you do, and the things which you write. You have written a history which religates the Prophet's motives in establishing an ***organized*** Church to the status of an "impulse" rather than Divine Revelation and Commandment from God. In continuing with your schurade, you describe the Prophet's First Vision as common and ordinary, and without significance in the latter course of his life in establishing the Church, and from beginning to end, you portray the Prophet's history in a Bazaar manner. Your chapter on the "Danites" and "Theocratic Ethics" shows a deplorable lack of insight. Over all the picture which you paint is one of massive confusion, contradiction and deception. In the end the Prophet is characterized as a criminal, who in the last week of his life denied his own teachings. Finally, you contradict yourself right and left as you attempt to make a case for the idea that the Prophet actually laid hands on young Joseph's head, giving him all the keys and ordaining him to be his successor. All this you portray in your characteristic Bazar and Bombastic manner, while at the same time, you cloak your book in the guise of an objective

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history, and in the writing style of a professional historian, who is well trained in his art.

How am I doing so far Mike — did I get the gist of your book! A careful reading has convinced me that your book is *the most significant* ***Anti-Mormon book*** *ever published*. Not that it is strictly Anti-Mormon, but without a doubt, to date, it is the most thoroughly researched ***attack*** on the historic foundation of the Restored Church that has ever come to print. After all, it has so many plusses which Fawn Brodie and the Tanners could never brag, and it comes with all the necessary credentials. As a young man you filled an honorable mission for the church. Following this you became a Ph.D Yale graduate, Doctor of History. You were a Professor of history at BYU for 12 years, and on top of this, for some odd 30 years you have specialized in Mormon history, with particular focus on Priesthood and Succession, which is the basic topic of your book. For all practical purposes you have lived in the Archives of the LDS Church for 15 years, and this too, with liberal access to the records. This is in sharp contrast to Brodie and the Tanners, who were never allowed access. Not only so, but during this time you were amply paid as a historian by church institutions, so in every way, you come with all the necessary credentials.

Your situation reminds me of what a friend once told me. There are two people you never want to cross, he said — one is your lawyer and the other your accountant — they know too much — they know how to hurt you! While this may be true for the individual — in the case of an organized institution like the LDS Church, the rule would apply to its historians. Be gentle! Don't do anything to upset them! They might turn on you and write a vindictive history!

As I see it, you have attempted to succeed where Mark Hoffman failed. Hoffman tried to undermine the historic foundation of the Restoration through the creation of forgeries. However, in this case, while your intent is obviously the same, your approach is different. Rather than create forgeries, you have developed your deception through the masterful manipulation of 100s of historic documents. I mean after all, who is going to take the time to look up and study 1000s of endnotes and cross references, especially when so many of them are not available for research to the general public. Not only that, but who would dare to challenge Quinn — the Doctor of History from Yale University! To be sure it won't be anyone who works for the church! They have too much to loose — there are too many

skeletons in the closet — and besides, confrontation and bad publicity is not the way the church solves its problems. So after palming this master deception upon an unsuspecting public, you march out into the sunset, triumphantly labeled under the phony banner of "marytr" for the cause of so-called honest and objective history.

In the Book of Mormon, it says that it is better that one man should perish than that a whole nation should dwindle in unbelief. In view of what you have done, it is obvious that you feel it is better for a whole nation to dwindle in unbelief, than for Quinn to perish without revenge. When you destroy a man's faith, you affectively murder his soul, as Salvation in the world to come cannot be had without faith. The scriptures teach that it is a greater sin to destroy a man's soul than it is to take his life. They teach that if a man should labor all his days "and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the Kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:15) If this is true — and with your mouth you profess a belief in the Scriptures — then how utterly damning must be the opposite course which you have taken. You are guilty of attempting to destroy the faith of millions of Latter-day Saints — and all this for revenge — to avenge yourself against the General Authorities of the "Mormon Hierarchy".

You know Mike, Mark Hoffman was so highly respected, that no one ever thought to question him — at least not until he went too far — and then, after that, he was finally exposed. And just so, in your own self confidence you have made the same mistake. You have gone too far beyond the bounds of your sources, and have done it so often and consistently that an obvious pattern has emerged — so now it's your turn for "Total Exposure"! We will discuss the pattern later on, but let us begin your review with a brief look at the simple things first.

By and large your work is slopy — your citations are often wrong and obviously in your rush for Christmas, you never proofread your quotes against original sources, as there are a lot of mistakes which otherwise you would have caught. In one chapter alone you had 87 endnotes which were misnumbered (see the notes numbered from 111 to 198, between pages 125 and 141). These kinds of mistakes are easy to understand, but on one occasion you even went so far as to cite a Hoffman fraud (see page 141, note 194, also page 373). Now that's really sloppy Mike — someone with your training and expertise ought to be more careful. Lets see, this isn't the first time you have cited a Haufman fraud is it! You also wrote a major piece based on Haufman's

forgery of the Joseph Smith III blessing, didn't you ("Joseph Smith III's 1844 Blessing and the Mormons of Utah", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* Vol 15: <Summer 1982> 69–90). But now lets get on with the real hub of the problem — your bad "history". It starts on page one and thoroughly runs through the whole book — page after page you go on.

You start out by religating the Prophet's motives in establishing an "organized" Church to the status of an "impulse" which you then say developed "gradually", and you speak of this again on page 7. Now we all know what the "common" understanding of the word "impulse" is, don't we Mike. This is double-talk — it is a deliberate degredation to the Restoration of the Divine Church which you ***claim*** to believe in — and as we shall see, your statement runs contrary to ALL the sources, including those which you cite to make your point.

December 1996 — sorry about delaying your review Mike, but I had some unfinished projects which were long over due. Some of these are finished, and hopefully I will now be able to devote a few months to the review of your book. In the past you have said that reading my work has led you to a major change of thinking on the issue of Succession — let us see if I cannot also change your perspective on the Restoration and Church History. I hope you will excuse me for quoting so profusely from the historical record, but I do not want to snow our readers with thousands of footnotes which they will never read. Anyway, to get on with our subject:

In the process of undermining the significance of the Prophet's First Vision, you state that there was nothing about it which "was unusual for his time and place". According to you we are to believe that as of the Spring of 1820, it was normal for common every day folk and their ministers to experience open day visionary communication with God the Father and Jesus. It wasn't until decades later that "Americans [finally] grew to regard converse with God as unusual" — and not until then that the First Vision finally became useful as a missionary tool (*Origins* 3–4). You must think your readers are stupid Mike, or you wouldn't write this kind of stuff. When you make statements like this it makes me wonder if you have ever read the Prophet's history. Of course I'm sure you have, but you do not seem to remember what it says. Let me refresh your memory. Remember what happened when the Prophet told Reverend Lane about his experience. Not only did the Reverend treat the boys comunication lightly:

but *with* ***great contempt****, saying it was all of the devil, that* ***there was no such thing as visions or revelations*** *in these days; that all such things had* ***ceased with the Apostles****, and that there* ***never would be any more of them***. (*Unpublished Revelations Vol* 2:5:21; *Unpublished Revelations* will hereafter be referred to as *UPR*)

In continuing, the Prophet stated that he "felt much like Paul when he made his defense before King Agrippa and related the account of the vision he had when he 'saw the light and heard a voice,'":

but still ***there were but few*** *who believed him;* some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled; but all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had . . . . ***So it was with me****,* I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak unto me . . . *and though I was hated and persecuted* ***for saying that I had seen a vision*** yet it was true (*UPR* Vol 2:5:21–25)

To be sure, what the Prophet reports here does not lead one to believe that an experience like the First Vision was common and ordinary. On the contrary, in his earliest account he says that he 'could find none that would believe it' (*UPR* 2:1:30). Not only does this affirm that open day visionary communion with God the Father and Jesus Christ was uncommon, but as the Prophet points out above, the same mentality and mindset existed during New Testament times as well. We can gather from this, that notwithstanding all our modern gadgets, human nature really hasn't changed that much. This is not to deny that as of 1820, there were others who had visionary experiences — though contrary to what you have written, there is nothing to show that they compare to the magnitude of the Prophet's First Vision. Not only so, but as with our day, these were the exceptional experiences of a very few. On top of this, be it remembered that the traditional doctrine of Protestant America, was that *all such things* ***had been done away with*** *since the time of the New Testament*, and hense the common dogma of Christianity that ***the Cannon of Scripture was forever closed***. To quote one of the Prophet's later accounts of his vision:

[He] told the Methodist priest [who] said [that] this was not a[n] age for God to reveal himself in vision [for] revelation has ceased with the New Testament." (*UPR* Vol 2:7:9)

As for your statement that the First vision was not used as a missionary tool until the 1870s, when Americans finally began to regard

converse with God as unusual (*Origins* 3) — this also runs contrary to the historical record. Consider the following account which comes from Edward Stevenson:

> I first saw . . . [the Prophet Joseph Smith] in 1834 at Pontiac [Michigan] . . . . The love for him, as a true Prophet of God, was indelibly impressed upon my mind, and has always been with me from that time, although nearly sixty years have since passed away.
>
> In that same year, 1834, *in the midst of* ***many large congregations***, the Prophet testified with great power concerning ***the visit of the Father and the Son***, and the conversation he had with them. Never before did I feel such power as was manifested on these occasions (*UPR* Vol 2:8:1–4)

On another occasion Stevenson elaborated further concerning the Prophet's testimonial:

> 'The Old Mormon Schoolhouse' . . . is where Mormonism was first preached in Michigan . . . . . in 1834 Joseph Smith the Prophet preached with such power as had not there ever before been witnessed in this nineteenth century. . . . Let me as a living witness speak of ***the moving, stirring sensation*** *created in this town* and surrounding country of the then Territory of Michigan. . . . . I can very well remember many of the words of the boy Prophet as they were uttered in simplicity, but with a power which was irresistible to all present . . . . Here are some of the Prophet's words, as uttered in the schoolhouse. With uplifted hand he said: *"I am a witness that there is a God,* ***for I saw Him in open day****, while praying in a silent grove,* in the spring of 1820." He further testified that God, the Eternal Father, pointing to a separate personage, in the likeness of Himself, said: "This is my Beloved Son hear ye Him." O how these words thrilled my entire system, and filled me with joy unspeakable to behold one who, like Paul the apostle of olden time, could with boldness testify that he had been in the presence of Jesus Christ!" (*UPR* Vol 2:9:1–5, 10–14)

We see from this that the Prophet spoke of the First Vision in proselyting situations at least as early as 1834, and this too, in the Strength and Power of the Spirit. Again, *contrary to what you say* (*Origins* 4), it is obvious that his testimony in relating his experience of the First Vision was ***"sensational"***, and that it created a powerful affect upon the minds of those who heard it.

In continuing you state that the experience of the First Vision never transformed the Prophet's life. Here again you run head long in contradiction to historical sources. Let us read his own account and see the affect which it had on his mind. He said that:

my soul ***was filled with love*** *and for many days I could rejoice with great joy;* ***and the Lord was with me*** (*UPR* Vol 2:1:30)

Again on another occasion the Prophet stated that he was *"filled with* ***unspeakable joy****"* (*UPR* Vol 2:2:9). This is the personal affect which the First Vision had on his heart and mind. Did it change him? He said it did. But now let us examine the long term affect which it had on his life — that is, aside from the knowledge of God which the Vision conveyed to his mind. As the Prophet relates it himself:

I continued to pursue my common avocations in life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, *all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious* ***because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision*** . . . (*UPR* 2:5:27–29)

Again on another occasion the Prophet stated:

When *I went home and told the people that I had a revelation and that all the churches were corrupt,* ***they persecuted me*** *and* ***they have persecuted me ever since***. (*UPR* 2:6:7)

The Prophet here speaks of his life being immersed in persecution because of telling others about his Vision, but persecution was not the only effect which the Vision had upon the Prophet's life, as it also isolated him socially — it made him an outcast and prevented him from joining in the social communion of a church. Let us remember that Joseph's mother, brothers and sister had joined the Presbyterians — as he expressed it:

A[t] revival meeting[s] his mother and br[others] and sisters got religion. *He wanted to get religion too — [he] wanted to feel and shout like the rest"* (*UPR* 2:7:1–4).

Yet Joseph's desires notwithstanding, the Divine mandate which was communicated in the First Vision forbid him from joining "any of the religious sects of the day" (*UPR* 2:5:27–29). We can gather from this that the experience of the Vision separated the boy Prophet from the social life and society of the religious element which he preferred and forced him to be a loner — it put his life on a totally different track, and contrary to what you have written, a track which ultimately would prepare him for a future mission as the founding Prophet of the 7th dispensation.

In short, it is self-evident from the Prophet's history, that in fact the First Vision did transform his life. Prior to the vision he was just a boy looking for a church to join. But after the experience and because of it,

he became a Prophet of God who had received direct communication with Heaven. Of necessity, the overwhelming knowledge which was then conveyed to his mind set him apart from others. On top of this, his telling of the vision submerged his life in persecution. To summarize, the experience of the First Vision transformed his life in at least four different ways: he had an audience with God and Jesus and partook of the effects of the Divine presence — he was made the object of "severe persecution" and became a social outcast — he was forbidden to join in the religious communion of other churches — and finally his life was put on hold to wait upon the Lord for further revelation.

In your book you state that the First Vision was the result of young Joseph's desire *to obtain a forgiveness of sins,* and then you say *that religious revivals had motivated his repentance.* As with so many other things which you have written, this also flies directly in the face of all the accounts of the Vision. In the 1832 account it states that when the Lord appeared, he was forgiven his sins (*UPR* 2:1:24), but in no place does it say that Joseph went in prayer to obtain forgiveness. The context is that he went to God for mercy as there was no one else to whom he could turn. The mercy which he desired could not refer to forgiveness as he would not have thought to obtain forgiveness at the hands of men. Indeed, as of this time the young boy had already made a diligent appeal to the wisdom of man for the information which he desired, but in this effort he only met with confusion and discord. The mercy which he desired was the revelation and direction of God, that he might resolve the dilema in his mind respecting the whereabouts of the Divine Church. After witnessing the confusion which existed among the different sects, he found himself at a loss for answers. Once he discovered the passage in James, he finally realized that the only reliable source for the information which he desired was God Himself. As we shall see, this is the context of this first account of the Prophet's Vision, as well as all others which followed it.

With regard to the Prophet obtaining forgiveness — an examination of the historial record will reveal that forgiveness of sins was a common theam which came up time and time again in the visions and revelations which were given to the Prophet (D&C 25:3; 29:3; 31:5; 36:1; 50:36; 60:7; 62:3; 64:3; 82:1; 84:61; 108:1; 110:5; 124:76, 78; 132:50). When Christ appeared to Joseph in the Kirtland Temple, the first order of business was the forgiveness of sins (D&C 110:5), yet

this is no argument that the Prophet was in the midst of a purification ritual, or even that the revelation was sought in order to obtain forgiveness. It is evident from scripture, that when man is brought to stand naked before the all seeing eye of Almighty God, forgiveness does come up, however this is no argument that every encounter with God is spawned by a desire for forgiveness. Bearing this in mind, let us examine the documents which history has left to us and see if we can discover the Prophet's purpose in going to the Lord:

Being *wrought up in my mind respecting the subject of religion,* and looking at the different systems taught the children of men, *I knew not who was right or who was wrong,* but considered it ***of the first importance to me*** that I should be right, in matters of so much moment, matter[s] involving eternal consequences. ***Being thus perplexed in mind*** I retired to the silent grove and there bowed down before the Lord . . . ***Information was what I most desired at this time****,* and *with a fixed determination to obtain it,* ***I called on the Lord*** (*UPR* 2:2:1–4)

On another occasion the Prophet said:

When about fourteen years of age *I began to reflect upon the importance of being prepared for a future state,* and *upon enquiring the plan of salvation I found that there was a great clash in religious sentiment;* If I went to one society they referred me to one plan, and another to another; each one pointing to his own particular creed as the summum bonum of perfection: Considering that ***all could not be right****,* and that *God could not be the author of so much confusion* ***I determined to investigate the subject more fully****,* believing that if God had a church it would not be split up into factions, and that if he taught one society to worship one way, and administer in one set of ordinances, he would not teach another principles which were diametrically opposed. *Believing the word of God* ***I had confidence in the declaration of James*** . . ." (*UPR* 2:3:4–9)

On another occasion the prophet said:

There was *a reformation* among *the different religious denominations* in the neighborhood where I lived, and *I became serious and was* ***desirous to know what church to join***. While thinking of this matter, I opened the Testament promiscuously on these words in James, "Ask of the Lord who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." ***I just determined I'd ask him***. I immediately went out into the woods where my father had a clearing and went to the stump where I had stuck my axe when I had quit work, and I kneeled down and prayed saying, "***O Lord, what church shall I join***?" Directly I saw a light and then a glorious personage in the light, and then another personage. And the first personage said to the second, *"Behold my*

beloved son, hear him." — *I then addressed this second person saying,* ***"O Lord, what Church shall I join?"*** He replied, "***Don't join any of them, they are all corrupt***. (*UPR* 2:6:4–10)

Again in the prophet's history he writes:

Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived *an unusual excitement on the subject of religion*. It commenced with the Methodist, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, "Lo, here," and some, "Lo, there;" Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist . . .

I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely, my mother Lucy, my brothers Hyrum, Samuel Harrison and my sister Sophronia.

During this time of great excitement, my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but, though my feelings were deep and often pungent {poignant}, still I kept myself aloof from all those parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit: but in process of time *my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them,* but ***so great was the confusion*** and strife among the different denominations that *it was impossible for a person young as I was* and so unacquainted with men and things *to come to any certain conclusion* ***who was right and who was wrong***. My mind at different times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult was so great and incessant. . . .

In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, *I often said to myself,* what is to be done? ***Who of all these parties are right?*** Or, are they all wrong together? *If any one of them be right, which is it,* and ***how shall I know it?***

While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth unto all men liberally and ubraideth not and it shall be given him.

Never did any passage of Scripture ***come with more power to the heart*** *of man than this did at this time to mine*. It seemed to enter with great force ***into every feeling of my heart***. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that *if any person needed wisdom from God I did, for how to act I did not know,* unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, {I} would never know . . . . *At length I came to the conclusion that I must* ***either remain in darkness and confusion****, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. . . . So in accordance with this my determination . . . I retired to the woods to make the attempt*. . . . . .

My object in going to inquire of the Lord ***was to know which of all the sects was right?*** that I might know which to join. No sooner therefore did I get posession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, *which of all the sects was right, and which I should join* (*UPR* Vol 2:5:5–18)

All this makes it absolutely clear that young Joseph's purpose in going into the woods to pray was to find out which church to join, huh Mike! According to the historical record, it was not for the purpose of having his sins forgiven him, was it! So why then did you write in your book that Joseph went into the woods to pray to God to be forgiven his sins? Since all these materials have been readily available to you, I am forced to conclude that your deliberate intent was to misrepresent the First Vision and thereby undermine its significance as an integral part of the Restoration, and that you have ***ulterior motives*** *for doing so*. Let us see if we can find out what they are. In continuing you write:

Neighbors testified that during the spring of 1820 Smith became a seer in quest of buried treasure. Occult texts and custom dictated that treasure-seers should seek divine forgiveness in purification rituals. Perhaps this, as much as religious revivals, motivated the youth's repentance." (*Origins* 3)

In this statement your motive is laid bare. You want to connect the Prophet's First Vision to a "purification ritual" and being a "Treasure-Seer". In order to do this it became necessary for you to claim that the Prophet went in prayer to God to obtain forgiveness of sins. However, as we have seen, there is no evidence from the historical record which would warrant such an assumption. Of course the paper will hold still and you can write anything you want on it, and such things do spice up your "history", but this does not make it so. Good history is predicated upon the historical record, while the assumption which you have made is not. On the contrary, all the accounts show that Joseph's purpose was to find out which church to join.

The evidence speaks for itself Mike! It is only in view of an ***ulterior motive*** that I can understand how a historian so well versed as yourself can write upon the subject of the First Vision and neglect to mention the major theam of the whole experience. A confused boy goes to God in Prayer and pleads for Mercy and Guidance, that he might be Divinely led in making the all important decision of deciding which church to join. He does this under the assurance that God will answer those who come to Him in Faith. Much to his amazement, in

answer to his prayer, God the Father and Jesus Christ appear before him in broad daylight and declare that there has been an apostasy from original Christianity and that all churches then on Earth are corrupt. The young boy is then instructed by God not to join any Church which is then on Earth and commanded to wait upon the Lord for further revelation, when the Fulness of the Gospel will be made known to him! The actual experience of the First Vision just doesn't fit in with the predetermined course and thesis of your book does it Mike — so you very conveniently decide to leave out the real reason why Joseph went in prayer to God and invent another in its place — a "Purification Ritual" and "Money Digging" — what a great way for a supposed believer to start a narration on the history of the Restored Church. I must confess, considering your objective, the whole idea is a brilliant Tactical Manover.

With regard to occult texts and custom dictating that treasure seers pass through a Purification ritual — as with Christianity, the occult has many flavors, and the fact that someone wrote a book about purification rituals in England does not prove that Joseph Smith practiced it in New York. Nor for that matter would a book being printed in New York prove it. The truth is, there is no historical statement coming from any source whatever, whether Mormon or anti-Mormon, which connects the First Vision to a Purification ritual, and the idea that it was is nothing but speculation and conjecture on your part. *Mormonism Unvailed*, which you cite for authority in your book, does not mention the First Vision, nor does it indicate that the mysticism of the Smiths involved a purification ritual. Indeed, according to this source, the Smith family was too filthy and loathsome to be concerned about such things.

You state that Joseph's neighbors testified that he became "a seer in quest of buried treasure" in "the Spring of 1820" (*Origins* 3) — actually though, they did not say this. Really Mike, quoting anti-Mormon sources is bad enough, but if you must quote them, you need to make a bigger effort at being more precise in your citations. As it is, through misquoting you end up being more anti-Mormon than the anti-Mormons. The William Stafford affidavite states that he "first became acquainted with Joseph, Sen., and his family in the year 1820". In continuing he stated that "A great part of their time was devoted to digging for money: especially in the night time, when they said the money could be most easily obtained" (*Mormonism Unvailed* 237). It will be noticed that

Stafford does not specifically say that they were digging for money in 1820, to say nothing of the "Spring of 1820", and no mention is made of Joseph being a "Seer". The only thing which Stafford actually says about 1820 is that this was when he met the Smiths. Again, the affidavite of Henry Harris states that he "became acquainted with the family of Joseph Smith, Sen. about the year 1820". He then stated that "They [i.e. the Smiths] were a family that labored very little — the chief they did, was dig for money" (*Mormonism Unvailed* 251). According to this affidavite, Harris is not certain what year he met the Smith's and he does not explicitely state that they were engaged in digging for money in 1820, much less the "Spring of 1820", and no mention is made of Joseph being a "Seer". The Joshua Stafford affidavite states that he "became acquainted with the family of Joseph Smith, Sen. about the year 1819 or 20." In continuing he states that "***They then were laboring people***, in low circumstances. A short time after this, they commenced digging for hidden treasures, and soon after they became indolent, and told marvellous stories about ghosts, hob-goblins, caverns, and various other mysterious matters" (*Mormonism Unvailed* 258). Here again, he states that he became acquainted with the Smith family in "about the year 1819 or 1820" and that when he met them "they . . . were laboring people, in low circumstances." It was not until an unspecified time later, after making their acquaintance, that he says they "commenced digging for hidden treasures". He openly confesses that he was not certain what year he met them, and he does not attempt to say what year they commenced digging for "hidden treasures", and again, no mention is made about Joseph being a "Seer".

Of all the affidavites which were published in *Mormonism Unvailed*, only the Willard Chase affidavite states that the Smiths were engaged in money digging in the year of 1820, but even in this statement no mention is made of digging for money in the "Spring of 1820" and nothing is said about Joseph being a "Seer".

To be sure, excavations and digging in the ground for burried treasure could not have taken place before the snow melted or before the ground thawed from the previous winter. This is a process which commences in the Spring. I guess if you want, you can ***speculate***, and say that Joseph was out digging for treasure in the frozen ground and mud, but the historical record does not vindicate this position. Actually, the only thing which the historical record says about Joseph

and "the Spring of 1820", is that this was when he experienced his First Vision. (*UPR* 2:5:14).

Of the four affidavites cited above, two of them state that Joseph Jr. had a stone which he would place in his hat to find treasure and a third states that he used a stone to tell fortunes. This stone is the only method which is described by Joseph's detractors, wherein they speak of him hunting for treasure. Yet the Willard Chase affidavite emphatically states that the stone which Joseph Jr. used for treasure hunting was first discovered by himself ***in the year 1822,*** while digging a well in company with Joseph Smith Jr. and his older brother Alvin. This would remove Joseph's treasure hunting days as described by his detractors to at least 2 years after the experience of his First Vision. Consider the following:

"Testimony of Willard Chase.

Manchester, Ontario Co. N. Y. 1833.

I became acquainted with the Smith family, known as the authors of the Mormon Bible, in the year 1820. At that time, they were engaged in the money digging business, which they followed until the latter part of the season of 1827. ***In the year 1822***, I was engaged in digging a *well*. I ***employed*** *Alvin* and *Joseph Smith* to assist me; the latter of whom is now known as the Mormon prophet. After digging about twenty feet below the surface of the earth, we discovered a singularly appearing stone, which excited my curiosity. I brought it to the top of the well, and as we were examining it, Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat. It has been said by Smith, that *he* brought the stone from the well; but this is false. There was no one in the well but myself. *The next morning he came to me, and wished to obtain the stone, alledging that he could see in it;* but I told him I did not wish to part with it on account of its being a curiosity, but would lend it. ***After obtaining the stone***, *he began to publish abroad what wonders he could discover by looking in it,* and made so much disturbance among the credulous part of community, that I ordered the stone to be returned to me again. He had it in his possession about two years.— I believe, some time in 1825, Hiram Smith (brother of Joseph Smith) came to me, and wished to borrow ***the same stone,*** alledging that they wanted to accomplish some business of importance, ***which could not very well be done without the aid of the stone***. I told him it was of no particular worth to me, but merely wished to keep it as a curiosity, and if he would pledge me his word and honor, that I should have it when called for, he might take it; which he did and took the stone. I thought I could rely on his word at this time, as he had made a profession of religion. But in this I was disappointed, for he disregarded both his word and honor.

In the fall of 1826, a friend called upon me and wished to see that stone, *about which so much had been said;* and I told him if he would go with me to Smith's, (a distance of about half a mile) he might see it. But to my surprize, on going to Smith's and asking him for the stone, he said, "you cannot have it; (*Mormonism Unvailed* 240 – 241)

As has already been noted, this statement emphatically states that the special stone which Joseph used to hunt for treasure was not discovered until 1822, which was two years after the Prophet experienced his First Vision. This would not deny the possibility that Joseph's father might have been involved in treasure hunting prior to this, nevertheless, none of the affidavits which you cite state that the Smith's were digging for treasure in the "Spring of 1820". Indeed the anti-Mormon source which you cite states that father Smith thought the best time to dig for treasure was in the heat of Summer. Remember the Peter Ingersoll affidavit — Ingersoll stated that he "first became acquainted with the family of Joseph Smith, Sen. in the year . . . 1822". He also states that "The general employment of the family, was digging for money". According to him, some time in 1822 or later, Joseph Sr. attempted to teach him how to find burried treasure through the use of a "mineral rod" which Joseph Sr. fashioned from a "witch hazle bush". In accordance with this statement, rather than digging for treasure in the frozen ground and mud of early Spring, father Smith preferred treasure hunting in the heat of the hot summer:

Another time, the said Joseph, Sen. told me *that the best time for digging money, was,* ***in the heat of summer****, when the heat of the sun caused the chests of money to rise near the top of the ground*. You notice, said he, the large stones on the top of the ground — we call them rocks, and they truly appear so, but they are, in fact, most of them chests of money raised by the heat of the sun." (*Mormonism Unveiled, Or A Faithful Account of that Singular Imposition and Delusion from its Rise to the Present Time, With Sketches of the Characters of its Propagators, and a Full Detail of the Manner in which the Famous Golden Bible Was Brought Before the World, to which are added, Enquires into the Probability that* ***the Historical Part of the said Bible was Written By One Solomon Spalding****, More Than Twenty Years Ago, and by Him Intended to Have Been Published As A Romance* — By E. D. Howe, Painesville: Printed and Published by the Author — 1834, p. 233)

According to you, Joseph might have arrived at his "early Spring 1820" date for the First Vision through the information contained in

Mormonism Unvailed (Quinn, *Mormonism and the Magic World View*, p. 113, note 1). Obviously you do not share the same difficulty which I do in placing confidence in such sources, but for the sake of argument, let us suppose that the Chase affidavite is correct in its dating, and that the Smith's were actually involved in "the Money Digging business" in 1820 — then the Smiths would have commenced digging for treasure in the hot summer, some three or four months after Joseph experienced his First Vision. This ***could*** be understood as in keeping with the Prophet's own account of his history. If this were so, it would indicate that this was the mystchief in which Joseph became involved a few months after he experienced his First Vision, and of which he later spoke and openly confessed. As he expressed it in 1832, some two years before the publication of *Mormonism Unvailed*:

> many days [after experiencing this Vision] I fell into transgressions and sinned in many things which brought wound upon my soul. And there were many things which transpired that cannot be written; and my father's family suffered many persecutions and afflictions." (*UPR* 2:1:30 – 32)

Again on another occasion the Prophet stated:

> When I was about 17 years I had another vision of angels; in the night season, after I had retired to bed; I had not been asleep, but was meditating upon my past life and experience. *I was well aware* ***I had not kept the commandments****, and I repented heartily for all my sins and transgressions,* and humbled myself before Him, ***whose eye surveys all things at a glance***. (*UPR* 2:2:13–15)

Again in the Prophet's history he states:

> During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision, and the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three, *having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day,* and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends . . . I was left to *all kinds of temptations, and mingling with all kinds of society,* I frequently fell into ***many foolish errors*** *and displayed* ***the weakness of*** *youth and the corruption of human nature,* which I am sorry to say ***led me into divers temptations****, to the gratification of many appetites offensive in the sight of God*. In consequence of these things I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when on the evening of the above mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God ***for forgiveness of all my sins and follies****,* and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before Him (*UPR* 2:5:28–29)

Well Mike, it seems you must have gotten your wires crossed. It was not in the case of the Prophet's First Vision that he sought God for the purpose of obtaining a forgiveness of sins, but it was three years later, in 1823. However, contrary to what you have written, according to the historical record, he did not go to God to obtain a forgiveness of his sins as a part of a "Purification Ritual" as a "Treasure-Seer" — according to the source which you cite, it would have been to seek forgiveness because of such things, and for seeking after the riches of the world rather than God, for all of which he had to repent. Perhaps these are the things that the Prophet says in his history, could not be written, but which in some degree of inaccuracy, as written and published from the slanted perspective of two liars (i.e. Philastus Hurlbut and E. D. Howe*), his enemies have preserved for us any way. That the Prophet's confession might allude to these kinds of things is suggested in his history. According to Oliver Cowdery, the day after his first introduction to the Angel Moroni, when he was on his way to the Hill Cummorah to obtain his first view of the *"Golden Plates"*, the Prophet began to speculate regarding the monetary value of the *"sacred treasure"* and the use which could be made of them to free his family from poverty (*UPR* 2:13:162–209). Again once he arrived at the Hill, and after lifting the stone lid, upon his first glance at the burried "treasure" his mind again reflected upon its monetary value. It was like a dream come true. For years he had sought for burried treasure, and now, through the help of God and the Heavenly Angel, he had finally found one. He reached forth his hands to take the "Golden Plates" from the box, when much to his amazement, he was shocked. Reluctantly he withdrew his hands only to make a second attempt, whereupon he received an even greater jolt. Again, a third time he attempted to retrieve the "treasure" only to be shocked again. He was frightened, and in the agony of his soul, he cried out unto the Lord: "Why can I not obtain the plates". Oliver Cowdery recounts the story as follows:

> After arriving at the repository, a little exertion in removing the soil from the edges of the top of the box, and a light pry, brought to his natural vision its contents. No sooner did he behold this ***sacred treasure*** than his hopes were renewed, and he supposed his success certain; And without first attempting to take it from its long place of deposit, he thought, perhaps, there might be something more equally as valuable, and to take only the plates, might give others an opportunity of obtaining the remainder, which could he secure,

would still add to his store of wealth. These, in short, were his reflections, without once thinking of the solemn instruction of the heavenly messenger, that all must be done with an express view of glorifying God.

On attempting to take possession of the record a shock was produced upon his system, by an invisible power which deprived him, in a measure, of his natural strength. He desisted for an instant, and then made another attempt, but was more sensibly shocked than before. What was the occasion of this he knew not — there was the pure unsullied record, as had been described — *he had heard of* ***the power of enchantment****, and a thousand like stories, which held the hidden treasures of the earth*, and supposed that physical exertion and personal strength was only necessary to enable him to yet obtain the object of his wish. He therefore made the third attempt with an increased exertion, when his strength failed him more than at either of the former times, and without premeditating he exclaimed, "Why can I not obtain this book?" "Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord," answered a voice, within a seeming short distance. He looked, and to his astonishment, there stood the angel who had previously given him the directions concerning this matter. In an instant, all the former instructions, the great intelligence concerning Israel and the last days, were brought to his mind: He thought of the time when his heart was fervently engaged in prayer to the Lord, when his spirit was contrite, and when [t]his holy messenger from the skies unfolded the wonderful things connected with this record. He had come, to be sure, and found the word of the angel fulfilled concerning the reality of the record, but he had failed to remember the great end for which they had been kept, and in consequence could not have power to take them into his possession and bear them away." (*UPR* 2:13:188–200)

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*Whatever credability their work (*Mormonism Unvailed*) might have merited was sacrificed through the deliberate introduction of lies into the text by its author and proprietor. Philastus Hurlbut, a bitter apostate who had been excomunicated for immoral conduct and dishonesty, was the first to invent the lie of the "Solomon Spaulding Manuscript Story", and E. D. Howe covered the lie and published it to the world under his own name in the first Anti-Mormon Book to be published in this dispensation. No doubt Howe suffered under the delusion that the worthy end of discrediting the Book of Mormon and the Restoration was justified by the necessary means of publishing to the world what he knew to be an absolute lie. In his book, Howe cites affidavits from Spauldings descendants in support of the Spaulding MSS theory yet consider the following testimony from John D. Lee and B. F. Johnson: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Howe himself well knew that Book of Mormon history did not square with the novel written by Solomon Spaulding, for he had the original manuscript in his possession. Surely had he thought that it supported what he claimed he would

have acknowledged that he had the manuscript and published it to the world, rather than surpressing the manuscript in his office.

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The Prophet relates the same story in the following words:

an angel of the Lord came and stood before me, and it was by night, and he called me by name and he said ***the Lord had forgiven me my sins***. And he revealed unto me that in the town of Manchester, Ontario County, New York, there were plates of gold upon which there were engravings . . . . . and then I immediately went to the place and found where the plates were deposited . . . and straightway made three attempts to get them. And then being exceedingly frightened . . . I cried unto the Lord in the agony of my soul, "Why can I not obtain them?" Behold the angel appeared unto me again and said unto me, *"You have not kept the commandment of the Lord which I gave unto you;* "Therefore you cannot now obtain them for the time is not yet fulfilled, therefore thou wast *left unto temptation* that thou mightest be made acquainted with the power of the adversary, therefore repent and call on the Lord [and] thou shalt be forgiven and in His own due time thou shalt obtain them." *For now I had been tempted of the adversary* ***and sought the plates to obtain riches*** *and kept not the commandment that I should have an eye single to the glory of God*. Therefore I was chastened and [I] sought diligently to obtain the plates and obtained them not until I was twenty one years of age." (*UPR* 2:1:33–42)

On another occasion the Prophet stated:

but what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before and added a caution to me, telling me that *Satan would try to tempt me, (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family) to get the plates* ***for the purpose of getting rich***. This he forbid me, saying that *I must have no other object in view in getting the plates* ***but to glorify God****,* and *must not be influenced by any other motive than that of* ***building His kingdom****,* otherwise I could not get them" (*UPR* 2:5:46)

Mother Smith's account reads as follows:

[The angel] made his reappearance, and rehearsed the same things over, *adding a few words of caution and instruction,* thus: ***that he must beware of covetousness***, and ***he must not suppose*** *the record was to be brought forth with the view of getting gain . . .* and that when he went to get the plates, he must be on his guard, or his mind would be filled with darkness. . . . . .

Furthermore, the angel told him . . . that he could not take them from the place wherein they were deposited until he had learned to keep the command-

ments of God — *not only till he was willing, but able, to do it*. The angel bade Joseph come to this place every year, at the same time of the year, and he would meet him there and give him further instructions. (*UPR* 2:12:1–2, 16–17)

The Prophet was allowed to see the "treasure", but he was not allowed to possess it — not until four years had passed. We may gather from this that it took the boy Prophet fully 4 years to come to a new mindset wherein he had an eye "single to the glory of God", and that it was not until after this that he finally obtained the Golden Plates.

In your book you state:

That it [i.e. the First Vision] contained no command to preach repentance or tell anyone of the experience is extraordinary within the context of his later career. His vision implied no religious mission, no church, no community, and certainly no ecclesiastical hierarchy. (*Origins* 3)

In making statements like this you talk around the Vision, but you don't talk about it — you talk about what it wasn't, but you won't talk about what it really was, and in doing so you refuse to acknowledge the obvious connection which it had to his later life and career as the founding Prophet of the 7th Dispensation. Let us rehearse the matter again.

Young Joseph was inclined to join the Methodist Church, but he was not really sure that it was true. He knew that Eternal Consequences were involved with his decision, so he went to God to find out which church to join. No, the Lord did not tell the fourteen year old boy to start a Church, but He knew that one day the boy would grow up to be a man — in the mean time, He told Joseph that all churches on Earth were wrong, and He expressly forbade him from joining any of them. But this is not all that the Lord said. He also told him that the doctrine taught by other churches was corrupt and that the "Fulness of the Gospel" was not at that time on the Earth. He further told the boy Prophet that the "Fulness of the Gospel" would be revealed to him at a later time. As the Prophet expressed it:

[I] saw two glorious personages who exactly resembled each other in features, and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noonday. They told me that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that none of them was acknowledged of God as his Church and Kingdom. And I was expressly commanded to "go not after them," at the same time *receiving a promise* ***that the Fulness of the Gospel should at some future time be made known unto me***. (*UPR* 2: 3:10–12)

Again, in the Prophet's history he writes:

I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned, that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but continue as I was ***until further directed*** (*UPR* 2: 5:26)

In view of this it is clear that even though the Prophet was not told to start a Church, he was told that as of that time there was no true church on Earth, and that the fulness of the Gospel was not then in possession of mortal men, *but that it would be revealed to Joseph* ***at some future time***. This in itself fixed the Prophet's mindset to wait upon the Lord *for further revelation*.

In your book you state that the First Vision "implied no religious mission, no church, no community". As we have seen, not only did the vision "imply" a religious mission, but it affirmed one in Joseph's later life. As the Prophet stated it, he was directed to *'continue as he was until further directed'* (PGP, JSH 1:26)*, when 'the* ***Fulness of the Gospel*** *would be made known to him'* (*UPR* Vol 2: Part 3:12 4:33). As of this time the Prophet would be the only person on Earth in possession of the Gospel. What was he supposed to do with it — keep it a secret! No, but as the beginning of his later Revelations manifest, through the publication of the Book of Mormon, he was to share it with all the world. If the boy Prophet did not yet know this as of the time of his First Vision, both God the Father and Jesus did.

You state that the Vision "implied . . . no church" and "no community", but nothing could be farther from the **Truth!** The Prophet went to God and asked Him which Church to join. Here was the *perfect opportunity* for God to set the boy straight. Did the Lord respond by denying the necessity of a Divine Church or baptism — did He deny the necessity of the New Testament Church which Jesus started while he dwelt on Earth — is this the way the Lord responded to the boys question? No, the Lord did not deny the idea of a **Divine Church**. Quite to the Contrary, He simply stated that it was not then on Earth, and in responding in this manner, He more than "implied" the necessity of its existence. Indeed, the Lord then told him "*to 'continue as he was until further directed', at which time 'the* ***Fulness of the Gospel*** *would be made known to him'*. On top of this the Prophet also stated that *"many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time"* (PGP, JSH 1:20). All in all, the substance of the Prophet's First

Vision amounts to a great deal more than the *measely* picture which you have painted in your book:

18 My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong) — and which I should join. 19 I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." 20 He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home. And as I leaned up to the fireplace, mother inquired what the matter was. I replied, "Never mind, all is well -- I am well enough off." I then said to my mother, "I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true." (PGP Joseph Smith History 1:18–20)

I did not start with your treatment on the First Vision because it was an easier mark than the rest of your book — on the contrary I started on page 1 because it was the first page and the beginning of your book, and hence as I thought a good place to start. Initially I had hoped that I could go through your book, at least for the period of the Restoration, but for now life must move on — it would take more than a year to go through all your footnotes and respond to them, but from beginning to end, the whole of your book is **Riddled** *with the same kinds of* **Problems** — *and the consistency of the* **Problems** *all* **Register** *to a* **Pattern**, *that reveals an obvious* **Personal Agenda** on your part — a **Burning Anger** *and a* **Desire** *to be* **Revenged** *upon the* **Brethren**, *whom as you feel, have* **Destroyed** *your* **Life**. *And so you wrote a* **Book** *with the* **Intent** *of* **Destroying** *the* **Historical Foundation** *of the* **Restored Church**. You say that you are **Mormon**, and that you believe in the **Restoration**, but from your perspective what does that mean! On that count what you have written in your book speaks loud for what you are and what you believe. As Christ our Lord has said, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh". Fred C. Collier

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